

The Political Significance of the Elections in America.

By John Pepper.

The elections in the United States reveal many changes in the political life of America.

One is best able to understand the political significance of the elections which have just taken place when one compares them with the last elections of November 1925. The elections in 1924 resulted in the complete victory of Coolidge or, in other words, of the Republican Party as a political tool of finance capital. The elections of November 1926 represent in the first place a definite defeat of Coolidge and of the Party Apparatus of the Republican Party which is in the hands of the big bourgeoisie.

The elections of 1924 reduced the Democratic Party to a Party of the "solid South". The present elections, on the other hand, signify an advance on the part of the Democratic Party, which shows a considerable increase in the Eastern States.

In 1924, in addition to the great historical parties of the bourgeoisie, the Republican and the Democratic Party, there stood a "third" petty bourgeois Party, the La Follette movement which managed to poll nearly five million votes but was unable to win any great number of mandates. No third Party came forward in the present elections. The "radical" and "progressive" elements sought to try their luck again within the Democratic and Republican Parties.

The elections of 1924 put an end to that state of affairs in which a small group of "progressive" republican and "radical" democratic senators came forward as an organised group, able to turn the scale between the two parties, and at one time made a coalition with the reactionary elements of the Republican Party and at another time with the conservative elements of the Democratic Party.

The present elections have however — and that is the most important political result of the elections — again produced this state of affairs. It is true the Republican Party possesses a nominal majority. As a matter of fact the group of "insurgents", of "progressive" senators have won so many seats that they can again openly come forward against the official party apparatus of Coolidge. The Democrats, it is true, have not obtained a majority, but Coolidge has lost his majority in the Senate.

The great victory of Coolidge in 1924 and the defeat of the La Follette movement for a long time rendered dumb all opposition against the ruling Party apparatus. Economic partial crises and the policy of American finance capital have again called forth an opposition.

The following driving forces are playing a role in this opposition: firstly, the industry of the middle west which is not so closely allied with finance capital and which is forming an ever-growing opposition against the European orientation of finance capital. Secondly, the farmers who even if they are not today being ruined to the same extent as was the case before the elections in 1924 when a universal wheat crisis prevailed, are nevertheless, in many parts of the country, showing considerable political discontent owing to the crisis in the cattle breeding industry and the cotton crisis. The process of trustsification promoted by the Coolidge governments has stirred up broad strata of the petty bourgeoisie — and this is the third element of the opposition. Fourthly, however, the forces of the working class, insular as they have taken part in the elections, strengthened the oppositional elements and contributed towards the defeat of the official candidates of the Coolidge government and the election of "progressive" and "radical" democrats.

The proletariat, as an independent factor, as a class, did not play any role in these elections. The candidates of the Socialist Party and also of the Workers (Communist) Party polled very few votes. The loose form of independent political action which in several States assumed the form of the "United Labour List" (in which the Communist Party participated), was not able to rally any great masses round it. It was only in the State of Minnesota that the farmer and labour movement assumed a mass character and succeeded in returning its candidates.

The elections again reflect the confused and undeveloped political conditions in the United States. In the United States the actual political struggles do not take place so much between the political parties as within the various political parties in the form of the struggles of fractions and of groups against one

another. The Republican and the Democratic Parties are to an equal degree parties of the big bourgeoisie, and both of them constitute a block of the various classes within a political party. Roosevelt in 1912 and La Follette in 1924 attempted to split the old parties and to form a "third", a petty bourgeois Party. Both attempts, however, were shortlived; they could not form any permanent parties. The 5 million petty bourgeois, farmers and workers who in 1924 voted for La Follette and at that time were so far advanced politically that they organised themselves independently from the old historical parties of big capital — these masses have in the meantime returned to the old historical parties and came forward in the election as "progressive" Republicans and "radical" Democrats.

It would be incorrect to regard the defeat of Coolidge as the appearance of a "progressive" block in the senate, as a radicalising of the political life of America. One could rather describe it as the exact contrary. Compared with 1924, when these petty bourgeois forces had separated from the two historical parties, their return to the Republican and Democratic Parties is a step backward. But one should also not forget that this progressive block can turn the scale if it forms an alliance with the Democratic Party against the Coolidge government. On the other hand there exist the possibility that the reactionary Republicans will form a block with the Conservative elements of the Democratic Party, as has already happened more than once in the past on several important questions (tariffs, taxation, world politics).

The American Federation of Labour which, as the organisation of the aristocracy of labour, has pursued for decades the policy of "punishing its enemies and rewarding its friends", and thereby forms the greatest obstacle to the development of an independent class party of the proletariat, will now point triumphantly to the victory of the "candidates of the working class" in the Republican and Democratic Parties and will thereby arouse illusions in the working masses.

The actual policy of the United States will not be altered by these elections. It remains, what it was: the policy of finance capital.

The Treachery of the Japanese Reformists.

By H. Eidus.

Telegraphic information is at hand, to the effect that several reformist organisations, led by the reformist Sodomay Federation, have left the Japanese Workers' and Peasants' Party. Thus the political party of the Japanese proletariat, created with such great efforts, falls to pieces before it could even begin to take up work.

The first attempt at the creation of a proletarian party in Japan was made in December of last year. The Japanese Peasants' Union (Nomin-Kumiay), the "centrist" organisation, took the initiative, inviting the collaboration of both the reformists and the Left elements. The reformists, in the person of the Sodomay, were, however, afraid that the Left would play a predominant role in the party and, at the last moment, refused to participate in the Constitutional Convention of the party.

This decided the party's fate: it existed for exactly two hours; after which it was closed by the police. The latter apparently decided that, since the Sodomay was not taking part in it, nothing good could come for the government from the party...

The demand for a political proletarian party is, however, very much alive in Japan. In view of the coming parliamentary elections on the basis of the extension of the election laws, it is essential that, along with the old bourgeois parties in Japan, a political-proletarian party should be created. The Left elements, in the persons of the revolutionary Hio-gikaya, the Proletarian League of Youth, the Society of Japanese Pariahs, "Suheysia" and the Society for Political Study, decided therefore voluntarily to refrain from participation in the Constitutional Convention in order that the Sodomay should have no pretext for sabotaging the party.

The party, under the name of the Workers' and Peasants' Party, was created on the 5th March. The Peasants' Union played a so-to-speak numerical role in it, while the Sodomay played the role of reformist "political commissar", keeping a sharp lookout that no sort of Left infection should creep into the party.